

# Hit the Beach!

## The Newsletter for Southern California ASL Players



### President's Corner:

by Matt Romey

I can hear it now: "Wait a minute, Matt's not the president!" Yeah, yeah hold your horses, I say. As I'm sure you all know by now, our esteemed president, Kent Smoak, is in the hospital right now, being treated for leukemia. In case you haven't heard this news, here is

an excerpt from his recent email to the online club members:

Last Wednesday [October 7], I was diagnosed with Adult Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia (ALL). It is considered acute because it occurred so rapidly. The primary symptoms of a low grade fever and tiredness were first manifested this past August. . . It is important to note that my form of Leukemia is curable. . . For those of you who have taken time to call, send cards and gifts or stop by to see me, thank you, thank you, thank you. It means so much.

Last week Kent had a setback and had to start chemotherapy again, so let's let him know that we are all thinking about him by bombarding him with calls and personal visits. Kent's phone number at the hospital seems to change frequently, so if you would like to call him and do not have the number, feel free to ask one of the club members with internet access.

**A Call To Arms:** When I heard of Kent's temporary detainment from his presidential duties I decided that I would take the reigns of editing the newsletter from him until he was back to snuff. I told Chuck Hammond of my plan, and he subsequently (and without my foreknowledge) put out a request for the SoCal internet community to put together the best newsletter yet! The purpose of this was not to show Kent that we can do all of this stuff without him, but rather to show him how much he has motivated us to come together and make this club become a reality.

Many people put a lot of work into this newsletter. I have learned that what looks easy is actually extremely time consuming. Kent has done this himself for the past two years, and I now appreciate the level of effort and dedication he has displayed in getting us this far.

I am sure we have all taken Kent's hard work for the Southern California ASL Club for granted in the past. But I am here to say "no more!" This is a call to arms for all Southern California ASL Club members: we need to contribute back to this club all that we've taken from it! I hope that what you hold in your hand is the first in a series of newsletters that is primarily the result of club member's submissions. So, in the months to come please follow the lead of the authors represented in this publication and send in submissions to Hit the Beach! Give back to the hobby some of what you've taken from it.

Enough with the mushy stuff. In run of the mill club news, West Coast Melee is still scheduled to be held on February 5, 1999 at the Radisson hotel in Culver City. (Also see the enclosed advertisement). Support the club and the tournament and send in your pre-registration now!

Also, in Open Gaming News, Random Wargamers, late of TRW, has a new venue in close proximity to old one. The new location is at 501 South Catalina Avenue in Redondo Beach. The playing hours are 1000 to 2000 and there is a slight cover charge of \$5.00 which is the same as Biola. Let's support Random Wargamers by meeting there to play ASL. Mark your calendars accordingly to reserve 11/14 and 12/19.

Karl Johnson has arranged an Open Gaming at Brookhurst Hobbies on Dec. 12th from 1000 to 1900 hrs. Let's see a good turnout for this one, as BH is the best alternative we have in the Orange County area till we get the Biola site back, and we would like to have future Open Gamings there. There is also a tentative Open Gaming at Dave Rosner's condo on Nov. 21. I'm sure Dave will let us know if this is a go or not in the coming days.

Ok, that's all for this month. I just want to express my deepest thanks and gratitude to Kent Smoak.

Get well soon, Kent!!

# Product Review: DOOMED BATTALIONS By Douglas Creutz

Doomed Battalions (DB) is the latest (and likely last) ASL release by Avalon Hill. DB covers the vehicles and ordnance of the Allied Minor combatants: Poland, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Greece, and Yugoslavia. The module includes 3 mapboards, new rulebook pages, 8 scenarios, 3 countersheets, and some overlays, and retails for around \$40. Without further ado, here's a detailed look at the contents.



## Counters

Probably the biggest selling point of module, we finally have Dutch trucks! Actually you get a lot more. There are lots of funky vehicles, including some two-turreted Polish tanks. And despite what you might think about Polish tanks, the turrets don't face each other. Belgium wins the prize for dumbest AFV, with a tank (the T-13 II) whose turret points backwards. You can rotate the turret, but then you have to fold down the turret armor... dumb, dumb, dumb. We also get the Danish Nimbus, a motorcycle sidecar squadron sporting a 20L AT gun and an AAMG. Of course, all manners of ordnance are also represented.

But that's not all. You also get human wave counters (for use with the new rules – see below), various types of ammo depletion counters (finally!), an Allied minor sniper, early-war SS 468s, and some special turret counters for the two-turret AFVs. In addition, there are replacements for the screwed up KGPII counters – now your SS engineers can be blue, not purple. Plus the incorrectly printed M4 hsts, 546s, and zookschreks have been fixed. Finally, you get two Polish flamcatchers... er, flamethrowers.

## Rules

First off, you get the Chapter H notes for all the new toys. As usual, the research is immaculate and makes for interesting reading. Second, there are some replacement pages for Chapter A. The biggest changes are rewrites of the human wave rules and control rules. The HW rule revisions, courtesy of Fritz Tichy, clean up what was a gaping hole in the system. The new rules are clean and don't leave much room for abuse. They are a bit lengthy, but the basic concept is simple – you have to establish a hex grain which constrains the wave's movement. The revisions to the control section also clean up some fuzzy concepts.

Third, there are two new sections for Chapter B – village terrain and railroads. The village terrain rules will be familiar to anyone who has KGP and/or PB – steeples, narrow streets, two-story single hex buildings, etc. The railroad rules add a new terrain type; they are quite different than

the RB railway embankment rules.

What you don't get are armory pages for the new counter sheets. Oh well.

## Mapboards

Three of 'em. First is board 9, the last of the old SL rogue boards (so named because of the original atrocious artwork) to be reissued. You also get two all new boards, 44 and 45. 44 is mostly open, very similar in feel to board 4. Board 45 is in my opinion the coolest looking board out there. It is a city board, but has a much denser feel to it than any of the other city boards. It features a huge "government plaza" in the middle which dominates play, including a 9-hex monster of a building reminiscent of the board 6 chateau. Be careful if you plan on a lot of AFV bypass, because many buildings are printed extremely close to the hexsides.

## Overlays

Primarily these are railroad overlays to be used with the new rules. You also get some new building overlays. Finally, there is an overlay which appears to be designed to cover the big building on board 45.

## Scenarios

You get eight new ones – they all look pretty good to me. Here's an overview:

"An Uncommon Occurrence" – a meeting engagement between German and Polish armor. This features the two-turreted Polish 7TPdw tanks, as well as their tougher 7TPjw brethren. The Germans get a hodgepodge of armor – PZ Is, IIs, IIIs, and some ACs. This looks to me to be a bit tough on the German, who is sure to be haunted by the ubiquitous B11 on all his MAs.

"Round One" – a combined arms German force tries to dig the Poles out of Warsaw. All kinds of toys, with the Poles getting 75 ARTs, 37L ATs, and some fortified building locations, and the Germans sporting PZ Is, IIs, IVs, and ACs, plus DCs and a FT. Both sides also get a 9-2 to motivate the troops. Not too long at 7 turns, this one looks like the "must play" of the bunch.

"No Way Out" – a night scenario. The Poles are on attack here with a 2-1 infantry advantage plus some TKS(L)s to lend armor support against a lone 37L AT gun. The Germans do get some reinforcements, including armor, so the question is whether the on-board force will be able to hold out long enough.

"Fighting Back" – see detailed analysis below.

"Good Night, Sweet Prince" – see detailed analysis below.

"Art Nouveau" – The German are on attack here,

trying to sweep aside a Belgian blocking force. The Belgians have a variable OB, with some interesting choices to make around force composition. The Germans have a decided materiel advantage but the VCs look to require some alacrity in pressing the attack.

"Rescue Attempt" – Another German vs. Belgian brawl. Here, the Belgians are beset by infantry groups attacking from different directions. To win, the Belgian merely needs to survive, but is outnumbered in infantry more than 2-1. However, the German has no tanks, while the Belgian gets 6! This scenario also features a railroad spanning the playing area.

"Pride and Joy" – the monster of the group, and a change of pace, as Greek cavalry sweeps down on a large elite Italian force. The Greeks are supported by captured Italian tanks and sledge-drawn artillery pieces. At ten turns and 20+ squads for each side, this one will take a while. The VC look pretty tough for the Greek, but they do have a fairly intimidating OB.

## Errata

Well, we've got some of that, too. Here's what's been announced to date:

Scenario 89 (Rescue Attempt) – Overlays RR3 and RR4 should be RR11 and RR12.

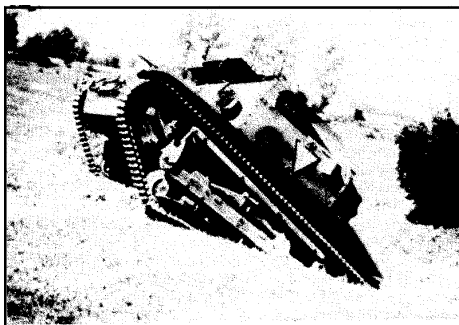
Rules – Chapter H, vehicle note 2 – the illustration for the Vickers two-turreted tank doesn't make any sense as shown. Rotate the vehicle counter 120 degrees counterclockwise and it will. Basically, the only place the turrets' fields of fire overlap is through the front VCA.

Counters – unfortunately there are a number of errors here. The T-13 II should be radioless. The following artillery counters should have their gun caliber overscored: C75 TR counters A-C, and C120 M31 counter A. The model 17S 155s should not be overscored on counters B&C; the model 17S 75s should also not be overscored (AP5 on the back is correct.) The Russian colored M3A3s should have superior side turret armor, not front. Finally, a few of the counter illustrations in the vehicle/ordnance notes are incorrect – go by what is on the counters & the corrections above. MMP has expressed a desire to correct these errors in a future release if possible.

Overall, though, not too bad given the time pressure MMP was under with the impending sale of AH to Hasbro. This module is a definite must-buy for any serious ASL player. The word is that supplies are rapidly running out, as AH only did one print run (and no more are forthcoming), so if you don't have it yet I'd run to the store and buy one. Otherwise, no Dutch trucks for you!

# Scenario Analysis:

By  
Douglas Creutz



## ASL 86: Fighting Back

26 Polish squads supported by 8 TKS tankettes have to march a long way and then drive the Germans from the "government plaza" on board 45. The Germans have a dozen squads plus 2 37L AT guns to stave off the Poles. Though the scenario is 10 turns, the first half of the game is spent moving the Poles into position. This is a long one, but pretty good. My impression after playing it is that it is probably a little pro-Polish; giving the German the balance (a 9-2) may swing it the other way. I'd happily take either side, though.

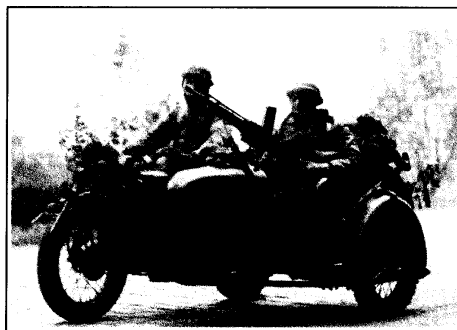
**Polish:** Initially you have a lot of ground to cover. The buildings you have to capture are large so it will take a few turns to dig the Germans out. Try and get to board 45 as quickly as possible. You have a few good axes of attack along both flanks and the center. Armored assault can help you cross the open ground on board 44; the German shouldn't have much to oppose you there besides long range HMG shots. Even these can be neutralized by a well-placed smoke FFE. Once you get to board 22 you can dance between the blind hexes.

Any forces the German leaves up front should be cut off and surrounded immediately – don't let them escape back to board 45. The armor is especially useful for this. (Frankly, it isn't useful for much else.) VBM freeze whenever you can, then bring up the infantry. The turn 4 flanking force isn't big, but you can form a nasty firebase by pulling the HMGs off the AA-trucks. Hopefully by turn 6 or so you should be applying pressure to the main line of resistance on board 45 from 2 or more different directions. Use the tanks aggressively; if you can trade a tank for a German squad it is well worth it. I wouldn't sweat the positions of the German AT guns, except perhaps to use 2-tank platoons so you don't get 3 bagged at once.

**German:** Your biggest problem is that your force

is really inadequate to hold off the Poles. Fortunately, you have time on your side, despite the length of the scenario. The key is to husband as much of your force as possible, keeping your infantry alive for a last ditch stand in one of the victory buildings. Depending on the main axis of attack, either 45K2 or 45O4 should be your fallback point. As the defender, you should follow one simple rule – whenever you are undecided about whether to fight or retreat, retreat. If you can preserve 7 or 8 squads for the endgame, you can make it very difficult for the Pole to root you out of a multi-level building. Unless you are very comfortable playing a fallback defense, I'd consider setting up 90-100% of your force on board 45, just to be safe. Any units you leave out as 'speedbumps' won't slow the Pole down much and will just leave you that much more short-handed during the endgame.

You can try to ferret away a HIPster somewhere sneaky in one of the victory buildings, but I'd prefer HIPing 2 HSs with the two ATRs to pound on the Polish tanks. Put them in upper levels somewhere and you can get a lot of shots off with them. The AT guns should be placed to support your last ditch stand area. Remember that you can't emplace in orchard-paved road hexes, thus you can't set up HIP there either. Your most important weapons system is the HMG – take your shots from the upper levels early on, but when the artillery is about to come down, find cover.



## ASL 87: Good Night Sweet Prince

A dozen German squads supported by 3 PzIIs must cross the board 22 canal. Facing them is a fragile but well-armed Danish blocking force. The attraction here is the Nimbus AT-motorcycle. This is a good tournament-sized scenario, and appeared balanced in my playing.

**German:** Your battle plan is fairly simple. First you must navigate board 16 and get into position for the bridge crossing. This should take you no more than 3 turns. Between armored assault, vehicular SD, and liberal deployment, you should

be able to get into position with few losses. The best axes of attack are up either flank; the south flank offers better positions on the canal bank, but the north flank offers a more covered approach route. Second, you have to neutralize the 37L AT gun to free up the tanks. Don't worry too much about the 20Ls, just don't present a flank shot. With the 37L down, the tanks can cross and pave the way for the infantry. You'll have to deal with the MGs at some point; use VBM freeze, smoke, and pray for reasonable ROF if the HMG is still in the steeple. Don't get too crazy with the tanks, though, as their VP make the VC much easier.

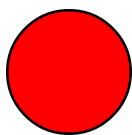
**Danish:** Like the last scenario, resisting the temptation to set up front is key. Look at how open board 16 is . . . I'll bet you're thinking of what some firelanes could do! Well, don't believe it. The mobility afforded by the German tanks consigns anybody left on the east bank to a quick death. Of course the HMG goes in the steeple, and the wire goes on the two bridge hexes. You might consider entrenching in 22BB10 to cover the BB5 bridge with a MMG firelane. The AT guns are a little trickier, as they must set up (non-emplaced) in the street; I'd consider trying to push them into the buildings to get more cover. Note that the 20Ls don't even have gunshields. 22CC6 and 22EE6 are both good at-start locations for the 37L, with adjacent building hexes that have good fields of fire. When the Nimbus comes on, dismount the 20L and the AAMG; this gives you 3 AT guns and 4 MGs in your OB. Don't duke it out with the German, skulk whenever possible, as your ELR 1 infantry force is very brittle. Hope that he bogs a tank or two on the wire before he rolls a colored "1". Remember too that you have the last player turn to launch a counterattack.

*Next issue: Round One and Pride and Joy*

## Where's the ladder?

The Southern California ASL Club Challenge Ladder has taken a short break to celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday. It will return well fed, bloated, and dreary from the l-tryptophan in the next issue (when Kent is back again to tally all the challenge results). Your challenges are still being recorded, however. So, please continue to send your results to the laddermeister Kent Smoak at 4241 Don Arellanes Dr, Los Angeles CA 90008-4202. You can also send the results by email to kentsmoak@earthlink.net. Kent has requested that, for the time being, you do not send results to him by phone.





# THE IMPERIAL JAPANESE ARMY:

When you *absolutely, positively* have to kill Americans in the PTO

by Chuck Hammond

I have to begin this article with an admission: I cannot believe I am doing this. I'm not the best ASL player in the world. All told, I probably win about 50% of my games. When I play the Japanese side, however, I win about 80% of my games. Superior and inferior opponents have often remarked on the skill with which I handle our former Asian adversary, so when it came time to publish our mega-zine to honor Kent, I figured that the Japanese would be a worthwhile subject for me to discuss. At the same time, I can't believe I am doing this because I feel like I am giving up what little advantage I have over my opponents in the ASL community (sniff!). But then again we in the SoCal ASL Club give each other hints and advice all the time, so I figure "What the hell! Let 'em have it!" So without further ado, here are some tips on how to play the Japanese more effectively (I would suggest that even those who think they "know the Japanese" also read on - I can almost guarantee that you, too, will learn something you didn't know):

## Voluntary rout

Contrary to common belief, a Japanese *full* (not reduced) squad can voluntarily rout. It does so by breaking into two half squads. Usage: Those two half squads, after routing to their leader (read: Commissar) will rally back, under DM, on 7's, 8's, 9's and better. Recall also that a Japanese HS's morale is *not* decreased on its broken side. One cool move is to put a squad or two out front on the defense to slow your opponent down. Right when he thinks he has your lonely squad in a vice, you voluntarily break (at which time he protests because he does not think Japanese squads can do that - you roll your eyes in response, break out the ASLRB, show him rule G 1.13 and ask, plaintively, whether you can proceed with your rout phase now), rout back to a waiting leader or rout *with* the leader the squad is stacked with (a leader who, by the way, is conveniently immune to both pinning and breaking - G 1.41), and rally in the ensuing rally phase. If time and opportunity present themselves, the two HS can later recombine and — PRESTO! — they are as good as new!



## SMC Banzai:

You liked that one, didn't you? Here's an equally dastardly trick that is not easily defeated.

Say your stack or group of Japanese squads is in a situation where it has to get away from this monster American kill stack that can

hit your group no matter where they go. The solution is easy: sacrifice a leader, preferably an 8+1 or thereabouts. Send him on a one-man Banzai Charge (G 1.5) toward the hostile kill stack. The American is now suddenly in the unenviable position of someone who must either fire at the little twerp and incur First Fire penalties (to say nothing of losing ROF) or allow the leader to enter his hex, at which time the stack may not fire out of the hex - A 7.212. Meanwhile, your Japanese squads, who seemed moments ago as if they would be taking a real pounding, may now either leave the American's LOS or approach that now-First/Final-fired American with the girly-man morale and make him pay the ultimate price for his interference in the sovereign affairs of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere.

Likewise, 8+1's and 8-0's make great DC Heroes. While DC Heroes are nice, there is no guarantee that you will have one and if you roll a 6, the MMC attempting the creation will Pin - G 1.421. By transferring a DC to a low-level leader, you will not be taking any such chances. In the MPh, conduct a one-man Banzai with your leader, who now has 8MF and a Morale of 9 (the same movement and morale as a TH Hero, not-so-incidentally). Should he make it into the target hex, he may detonate the DC *immediately* (i.e. in the MPh - 1.424 last paragraph).

## Knee Mortars:

In a word, Best Goddamn Light Mortar in the War and, as you have probably already noticed, the Japanese receive tons of them (in a typical scenario, they receive about 1 LtMtr for every 4 squads). I am not going to go into detail about how light the knee mortars are (4 pp fully assembled), their awesome range (1-16 hexes), their respectable ROF (1 at 1-2 hexes, 2 at 3-16), or anything of that sort. Rather, I am going to talk about SMOKE usage. That puppy fires WP6 at a range of 1-5 hexes and S7 at a range of 3-10. The optimum range to target, therefore, is 3-5 hexes. If the WP does not work, you have the possibility of getting SMOKE. In either case, the odds say you will probably get a shot off of one or the other type. Moreover, because it is a mortar, you have the potential for ROF, and thus a *smokescreen*. Use the SMOKE to prep the American for your coming Banzai Charge (including the SMC Banzai charge I describe in #2) or for the concealed Japanese squad(s) you want to move ADJACENT to the American without being stripped of concealment ("Sharpen those

bayonets, loyal subject of the emperor! For the time has come to dispatch some of Roosevelt's cowboys!"). Finally, be sure to fire it inside the American's hex so that he will incur the extra +1 penalty for firing out of a smoke-filled hex. If you are successful with WP, of course, the American with the Michael Jackson morale level may well break - A 24.31, so you may not have to worry about loss of concealment or return fire after all!

## HIP

Yes, it is true that the Americans, in a typical PTO scenario, enter the map with what in Ebonics\* might be termed *stupid* firepower (often more than twice that of the Japanese) and *stupid* equipment (including armor, FT, DC, and HMG). One of the principle advantages retained by the Japanese in order to counter such advantages is HIP. Remember, 10% of your force (fractions rounded up - G 1.631) gets automatic HIP *in addition* to whatever HIP is provided by SSR. In addition, any Japanese in PB may set up HIP (along with that PB, which receives an automatic HIP tunnel as well - 1.632), T-H Heroes may be set up HIP in '44 and '45 in pre-recorded hexes - G 1.422, all fortifications are HIP (even if in LOS of the American if set up in jungle, kunai or bamboo - G.2). Depending on the scenario, this may be a lot for the IJA player to remember, so I suggest that you plan your defenses hours in advance and go over them several times so the American does not "A.2." you when you bring out something that should have been revealed before. At the same time, do not bring out HIP prematurely, which leads me to my next point.

Read G.4 several times. Know it well. It is a godsend for the IJA. It basically says that Stealthy (all Japanese 1<sup>st</sup> line and Elite are automatically Stealthy - G 1.6) Japanese Infantry has three choices when the American enters his Jungle, Kunai or Bamboo location. He can: a) "bounce" the guy back, ending that unit's/stack's MPh and subjecting it to PBF b) let the American enter and tear him a new one with TPBF or c) let him pass. Of the three options, "c" is often the best one. There are two principle reasons for this: 1) You will lure the American into a false sense of security so jucier units come your way; also, you will have a handy Infantry Unit running around in his backfield to kill/capture broken units and limit/break off his rout possibilities and 2) If you think far enough ahead, you can set up a squad a few hexes "behind" your HIP Unit so that when the DFPh comes up, you can encircle the American by firing at him from either side. This is a cheap, effective and simple way to take American prisoners (and their SW). Be careful, though: Encirclement *cannot* occur during the MPh - A 7.7 - you have to wait until the DFPh if you want to Encircle.

*Continued on page 7*

# HELL 253.5

## ASL SCENARIO T7.875



**VICTORY CONDITIONS:** The Germans win if at game end they Control  $\geq$  four Level 3 hexes of Hill 621, provided that no Level 3 hex is occupied by any Good Order Russian MMC and/or Russian AFV with any functioning armament.

Simultaneous Set Up	1	END
German Moves First		

**Russian Units:**

- ELR: 3, SAN: 4
- 2M3: 6-2-8 w/ LMG
- 2L5: KV-1 M41, 6-2-8 w/ LMG
- 2K5: IS Fox, 8-1, 4-4-7 w/ HMG
- 2N0: 2-2-8
- 2N10: 2-2-8
- 2J6: 9-1, 6-2-8 w/ LMG
- 2N5: 76L ART (X)

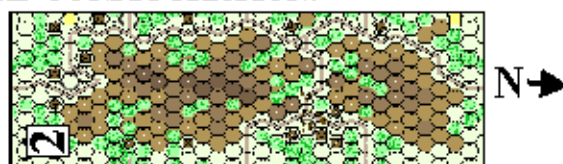
**Near PONYRI, RUSSIA, 9 July 1943:** Hill 253.5, hotly contested and paid for in men and machinery, finally fell into the grasp of the pansergrenadiers. The German's precious armor reduced to tatters, the dogged Russian defenders steadied themselves for a final counterattack. Could the Germans hold what they had fought and died for that day?

### BALANCE:

Russian: Delete one of the two SPW 251/1 from the German OB.

German: Make the MA functional for the PzKpfw VD in 2Q6.

### BOARD CONFIGURATION:



**German Units:**

- ELR: 4, SAN: 2
- 201: 2-4-7 w/ LMG
- 2Q1: PzJg Tiger
- 2S1: 7-0, 4-6-7 w/ LMG
- 2N4: 4-6-7
- 206: 4-6-7
- 2Q6: Immobile PzKpfw VD
- 2R8: 1-2-7
- 2N3: 10-3, 8-3-8 w/ Rus LMG & FT, 8-3-8 (Fan) w/ FT
- 2R7: SPW 251/1
- 202: SPW 251/1
- 2N6: 8-3-8 w/ DC
- 2P6: 7-0, 4-6-7 w/ LMG, 4-6-7 w/ LMG

### SPECIAL RULES:

- EC are Moderate, with no wind at start. Russians have MOL capability. All Guns are emplaced.
- Place Wire in P1, Q2, R3, S4, S5, and S6. Place 3 AT mines in P1, Q2, and S8. Place 1S Foxholes in K5, N6, O8, P2, Q4, Q5, Q7. Units in hexes with Foxholes may set up in the Foxhole location, up to the capacity of the Foxhole.
- All CA may be set up freely by the possessing player. All functioning ordnance may place a-1 acquisition in their LOS.
- Russians receive one 1942 FB with no bomb at scenario start.

**Aftermath:** The Germans attacked the machine gun nest atop the hill with flame-throwers, but were cut down by tank machine gun fire as they pressed forward towards the smaller of the two summits.

**Credits:** This scenario is based on the final round of the 1997 VASL tournament: ASL Scenario T7 (Hill 253.5) between Paul Sanderson and Robert Feinstein. ASL is a trademark of the Avalon Hill Game Company. The production of this scenario is in no way affiliated with Avalon Hill. Unmodified, this scenario may be freely distributed. Counter art is from VASL, by Rodney Kinney, with graphics by Carl Fung. This scenario is dedicated to Kent Smoak, to whom the Southern California ASL Club is deeply indebted. *Roll low and get well soon, Kent!*

A good Japanese defensive set-up in a lot of scenarios should make the American feel like he is entering a ghost town (The Green Hell and A Tough Nut to Crack are good examples) which is transformed before his eyes into a sort of Rambo-movie nightmare where the hunters gradually become the hunted. Such an outcome is enabled by an intelligent employment of HIP by the IJA player.

### Massacre/Hara-Kiri

"Now when would I ever make use of these rules?" you may ask. The answer is rather simple: massacre your prisoners if you have any suspicions that the guarding unit will be going into CC or if your prisoners become a liability (e.g. - you are unable to fire you MMC because it is guarding more prisoners than its own US#). By the same token, there is no excuse to be taken prisoner as the Japanese, which gives your opponent double VP and possibly info you would rather he not have (I am referring to the Optional Interro-

gation Rules - E 2). Before being taken prisoner during a CC Capture Attempt, make a TC and die on your own terms, like a man (G 1.641).

### Tanks

What to do about them? As the Japanese, do everything you can to kill American tanks (that is, if you are playing an opponent who knows how to use his tanks effectively; if not, let him bumble around with his tanks thinking they are making some sort of difference - you might even sacrifice a HS or two for this purpose - and concentrate the rest of your forces on his infantry). Light Mortars make surprisingly effective tank killers/disablers. They have ROF, use Area Fire and thus disregard AF modifications (except for those listed in the C 1.55 Indirect Fire vs. AFV chart on your Queer-DuCK). Thus an American Stuart (common in the PTO) can be killed on an Effects DR of 2 and shocked/immobilized on an Effects DR of 3. Fire often enough with ROF and it will eventually happen.

T-H Heroes are of course another way. I'm not going to repeat all the rules associated with T-H

Heroes right now. You can read the rules yourself. Rather, I am going to call your attention to the fact that they can be HIP'ed in advance instead of created (this is not a rule for which your opponent's consent is required). They may also be created during the course of play, most notably during the Americans' MPh (as he attempts to OVR or sleaze-freeze you with VBM) and during the Japanese APh(!). Even better, the T-H hero can roll for ATMM (and receives it on a 3 with no chance of pinning! - G 1.4231), thus improving his already-respectable chances of taking out the American vehicle.

Finally, there are your own men. Japanese *never* take PAATC's (G1.62). A reduced squad also retains the same CCV as a full-squad, so go ahead and swallow the reduction on the way in — I *know* you will trade a squad (or a reduction) for a tank any day, right?

Now go out and do the Emperor proud, will you? As for me, it looks as though I may be going into H-to-H Melee soon with my wife, Kyoko. I'll bet you can't guess where she's from . . .

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## After Action Report

By David Nicholas

*David Nicholas and Chris Nielsen are currently playing all the boxed scenarios in order, starting with "Fighting Withdrawal" on. Below is an After Action Report on two of their latest, (but hopefully not last) both from the PTO theatre.*

**ASL 66: The Bushmasters.** This has got to be one of the worst-balanced scenarios I've ever seen in the ASL boxes, unless we're doing something wrong. The terrain is (as usual) horrible, and while the Americans enjoy armor superiority, they actually have less infantry than the Japanese do. As the Americans you start out with about 20 squads entering on the first two turns, and two tanks, with another four on turn 4. The Japanese have 10 squads, plus a 10-2 leader, 2 HMGs, and 3 bunkers. Most of this stuff will set up HIP, even though the SSRs don't tell you they will, because of the rules in the book for Japanese and bunkers in PTO terrain. Also, with the PTO terrain rules, if the Japanese unit is in jungle (lots of that on the map), kunai (even more of that) or bamboo (enough to be annoying) he can remain HIP as long as the American doesn't search the location or remain in it at the end of the turn. Since the Americans have to hold a village, this makes it very hard to do this, and would have created problems for me at the end of the game if I hadn't conceded earlier.

That being said, it looks, on its face, as if the Americans have some serious advantages. First, they get a lot of firepower. They have 20 squads, three of them 7-4-7s, and the remainder 6-6-6s or

6-6-7s, with a half a dozen half squads besides. They get six tanks, two 60mm OBA modules, two FTs and two DCs. They should be doing pretty good, right? Unfortunately, they have to clear the aforementioned village, weather a banzai charge by 18 2nd-line Japanese squads that hits your flank, overcome the three Japanese bunkers, cross a stream that only has a wooden bridge across it, and be on the other side with 40 VP worth of stuff after ten and a half turns! Maybe, with luck, you could do this against the 10 squads the Japanese starts out with, but against the banzai also it takes way too long, in my opinion. Anyway, I started out with an attack through the village, running my armor support (when it arrived) that way also. Chris had some of his stuff cleverly placed (the AT gun was hoping I would run through the kunai past his jungle hex with a tank) but I was making fair progress in the early game. I actually got the OBA down a couple of times (a real challenge in jungle terrain) and the tanks were coming into play. Then the first couple of hitches occurred. First one of my squads crossed a clear area and was fired on by two HMGs from inside a bunker, at 12 -4 (!). Luckily that squad survived pinned (Chris rolled an 11 on his initial shot, and actually broke one of the HMGs momentarily). The bunker was well-placed however, and with a -2 leader in there, he could shoot a lot of stuff up, and did.

It is at this point that the banzai appears. It emerges from the woods on your flank, and though you have time to prepare (you're warned) you're never really ready. One of the Shermans had a gun malfunction, and I'd already lost two (one due to my stupidity, the other due to bad luck when I wasn't being stupid) so they weren't as much help as they could be, and the HMGs with

the 10-2 opened up and cleared a path for the banzai to run through. The result was the collapse of my attack about halfway to my objective, with a clear inability to get the 40 VP across the stream (mostly because I lacked the 40 VP anymore). I didn't like this scenario (in case you didn't get the message).

*The current consensus on this scenario seems to be that, although it is extremely unbalanced, it is also tons of fun. I told David this, to which he responded: it was about as much fun as having your teeth pulled." So, what do you think?*

**ASL 67: Cibik's ridge.** This was an unusual experience. Chris pointed out to me an article in one of the amateur zines (by Louie Tokarz, no less) explaining that this scenario is horribly unbalanced in favor of the Japanese. Chris then offered (because he'd been winning so often) to take the marines. I agreed, and we immediately got into a discussion of whether you can disband a column if it's out of LOS of enemy units. My feeling is you can (if you can't, the marine stays off the road, and the Japanese walks across the map not taking the requisite hill hexes, losing without firing a shot). Anyway, we played it once that you can't, and Chris killed me horribly. Looking at the scenario now, I should have used two columns, but it didn't occur to me at the time. We replayed it with me being able to disband the column, and this time the results were a little better, but again he had a -2 leader with some mean firepower, and several kills were made against stacks of stuff. He also had a half-squad advance into CC with two squads of mine and kill them in CC later, dying in the process. As you might imagine I became very agitated, and we gave up for the day....

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# THE FUTURE OF “THE GAME”

by EddieZeman

The Hasbro buyout of TAHGC hit us like a Katyusha barrage! The knee-jerk reaction was, “Oh my gawd, It’s over!”. For several reasons, I don’t believe that it is “over”. The main reason that ASL will live on is because of our passion for the game. My experiences with the players, designers, publishers and even with the Director of Marketing of Hasbro Interactive, since “the barrage” hit, have been favorable. But the real question is, “Who will pick up the ball and run with it”?

Here are the possible scenarios on what may happen with The Future Of The Game:

**Scenario 1:** “Swept Under The Noel Tree”: (Under 10% chance of happening): Hasbro will squash all Third Party Producers (TPP) with an effective and intimidating legal threat. This effectively blocks everyone (including the RaT) from further producing ASL. Hasbro then shoves the “game” under the carpet and lets it sit until it rots. End of “The Game”.

**Scenario 2 :** “Changing Of The Guard”: (20%) Curt Schilling spills his wallet and buys ASL (board game rights, only) from Hasbro. Licensing

for ‘most’ TPPs is granted and the hobby lives like never before! MMP establishes a ‘core’ braintrust and builds onto to our hobby. This is our wettest dream.

**Scenario 3:** “(Maybe 30%) Hasbro follows legal guidelines against TPP (as per “Noel Tree”) but then hires Don Greenwood and Bill Levay to run AH products. Greenwood then nominates another group (most likely, the MMP boys again) to micro-manage (hey, I know corporate lingo!) “The Game”. ASL sees a slight rebirth but lack of Hasbro interest sees maybe one game per year...enough to keep us whining but not enough for us to give it all up. TPPs are reduced to the pittance of submittals.

**Scenario 4:** “Riding Shotgun With The Fuhrer” (40%): Hasbro jilts Schilling and holds onto the rights of “The Game” and hires Levay and Greenwood to produce ASL. TPPs are also allowed to ride-along side-by-side with our new Fuhrer. The games sees new highs and we all get divorced in order to have the time to play all the new ASL products which are released.

The week before I went to ASLOK, I received a call from the Director Of Marketing of Hasbro

interactive. She told me that Hasbro has only recently acquired AH and had not yet begun to review their catch thoroughly. Only one game, Diplomacy, was currently being developed for the future. I was told that they would be contacting me when they knew the future plans for ASL.

Two days later I phoned the Director back and asked a few of my own questions. The first thing I asked was, “Would you sell me the rights to the ASL board game?” She answered by saying, very politely, that Hasbro had bought ASL for the same reason that I wanted to buy it: to profit from it. Little did she know. Although my question to her was purely rhetorical, I was feeling her out (so to speak) to determine what luck Schilling might have in his attempts to buy it....it didn’t sound promising. I now know that, in reality, she knew little about how miniscule ASL was in the big corporate world and that she was probably more conditioned to the big picture than to something as small as “asl”.

Only a few days ago did I think that Schilling had a surprisingly real chance of buying the game. However, since his post as of 10/29/98, I believe that what the Director at Hasbro told me is probably true...ASL: Not For Sale. Schilling wrote something to the effect that, “Hasbro intends to fully support the ASL hobby”, means, to me, that they plan playing Scenario 3 or 4. TPPs, stand by!



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